

YELLOWHAMMER *EMBERIZA CITRINELLA* SPECIES ACTION PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

Although not a UK priority species, the yellowhammer has been identified as a locally important species.

| Relevant Legislation/Species Status | |
|---|----------------------------|
| priority species (P) or species of conservation concern (S) | S |
| EC Birds Directive 1979 | - |
| Berne Convention 1982 | App. I I |
| Bonn Convention 1979 | - |
| CITES 1975 | - |
| WCA 1981 | Part I Section 1 Sch. 3 |
| Birds of Conservation Concern List ³⁰ | Amber |



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2. CURRENT STATUS

2.1 UK and Wales

The yellowhammer was once a common and widespread species throughout Wales. However, over the last few decades it appears to have declined considerably in inland areas; by 25-49% in the last 25 years. It is now relatively common only on mixed farmland on the coastal strip. The main diet of the yellowhammer is seeds, but they often take insects to feed their chicks, including moths, beetles and butterflies.

2.2 Caerphilly County Borough

Yellowhammers were also once a common and widespread species in Caerphilly county borough, but it is in decline. It is still reported from some areas of ffridd/coedcae in the county borough. Although these sites are not important nationally, they are of importance locally as the species is now uncommon within the area. The breeding distribution of yellowhammers in the county borough is shown on **Map 2.19**.

2.3 Links with Habitats

- *Ffridd/Coedcae*
- *Wildlife Corridors* (hedgerows)
- *Deciduous Woodlands* (open woods)
- *Heathland*
- Gorse, hawthorn and other scrub

3. CURRENT FACTORS AFFECTING THE SPECIES

- Land management factors, particularly the loss of mixed farming in Wales, may have contributed to their decline.
- The loss of winter stubble fields (particularly in the south of the county borough) robs them of a source of food (seeds) during the winter months.

- The increased use of herbicides removes the weeds that they rely on for seeds.
- The increased use of pesticides reduces the numbers of insects with which to feed their chicks.
- Inappropriate management and loss of bushy hedgerows, scrub and ffridd in which yellowhammers nest is also a significant factor.

4. CURRENT ACTION

- 4.1 New ESA prescription encourages the retention of winter stubble and growth of spring sown cereals.
- 4.2 The species will benefit from provisions under the Tir Gofal agri-environment scheme, including the retention and sensitive management of hedgerows.
- 4.3 Farmland and bird management guidelines have been produced jointly by BTO, RSPB and FWAG.
- 4.4 The Hedgerow Regulations, 1997, will protect ancient and/or species-rich hedgerows likely to be favoured by the species¹¹.
- 4.5 Census work by BTO⁶ monitors the extent of the decline nationally and the Ecology and Behaviour Group from Oxford University are currently analysing this information.
- 4.6 Gwent Ornithological Society and Glamorgan Bird Club produce annual bird reports^{17, 18, 19} and Census work for a new Gwent Breeding Bird Atlas has been completed.
- 4.7 Some birds may have benefited incidentally from initiatives carried out for other species such as the linnet that are associated with similar habitats.

5. OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

5.1 UK Objectives and Targets

Not applicable to this species.

5.2 Caerphilly Objectives and Targets

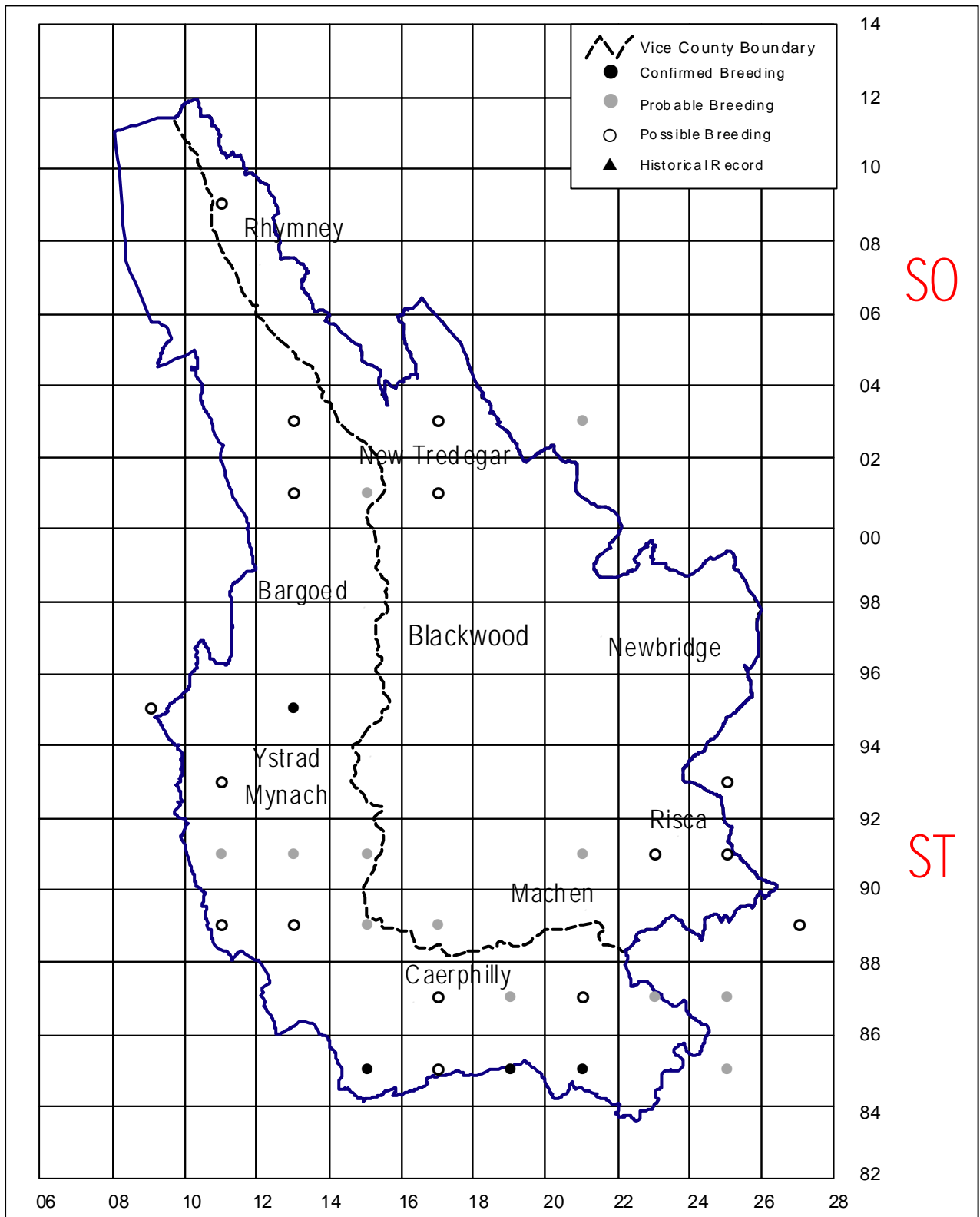
- 5.2.1 Halt the decline of this species (Target 2005).
- 5.2.2 Maintain the current local population through appropriate management of suitable habitats (Target: ongoing).
- 5.2.3 Increase the range of the yellowhammer (Target: 2008).

6. ACTION AND KEY PARTNERS

| Action | Key Partners | | Year to be complete or in place by: | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|---|
| | Lead | Partners | 2003 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | |
| 6.1 Policy and Legislation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.1.1 Seek to provide SINC status to suitable breeding areas and promote farming practices that will benefit the species. | CCBC | NAWAD NFU FUW RSPB | | | | | | | | | | ✓ |
| 6.2 Site Safeguard and Management | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.2.1 Adopt sympathetic management of all CCBC land with the potential for colonisation by yellowhammer and actively promote habitat creation at suitable sites. | CCBC | - | | | | | | | ✓ | | | |
| 6.2.2 Promote the importance of low-clipped, bushy hedgerows as breeding sites for the yellowhammer, and other birds. | GWT GLWT | CCBC RSPB landowners Coed Cymru | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 6.3 Species Management and Protection | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.3.1 Continue to implement wildlife legislation. | Gwent Police | - | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 6.4 Advisory | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.4.1 Inform all relevant groups of the conditions required by yellowhammer. | CBP | RSPB | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 6.5 Future Research and Monitoring | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.5.1 Survey and monitor yellowhammer populations within the county borough. | GBC GOS | BTO | ✕ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| 6.6 Communications and Publicity | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.6.1 The yellowhammer is a suitable candidate as a 'flagship' species for the LBAP process. It is attractive and easily identified by the general public. Produce information leaflets to be held in CCBC Country Parks and other facilities. | CBP | - | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | | | |

✕ Survey year to be determined.

MAP 2.19 - YELLOW HAMMER



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Atgynhychwyd o fapiaid yr Arolwg Ordnans gy da chaniatod rheolwr Llyfrfa ei Mawrhydi hawlfraint y Goron. Mae atgynhychu heb awdurdod yn torri hawlfraint y Goron. Gall hyn arwain at erlyniad neu achos sifil. Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Caerffili, LA09004L, 2001.